

## **LCA Terminology**

**allocation** – partitioning the input or output flows of a process or product system between the product system under study and one or more other product systems

**ancillary input** – material input that is used by the unit process producing the product, but which does not constitute part of the product

**category endpoint** – attribute or aspect of natural environment, human health, or resources, identifying an environmental issue giving cause for concern

**category indicator** – quantifiable representation of an impact category

**characterization factor** – factor derived from a characterization model which is applied to convert an assigned life cycle inventory analysis result to the common unit of the category indicator

**comparative assertion** – environmental claim regarding the superiority or equivalence of one product versus a competing product that performs the same function

**co-product** – any of two or more products coming from the same unit process or product system

**cut-off criteria** – specification of the amount of material or energy flow or the level of environmental significance associated with unit processes or product system to be excluded from a study

**elementary flow** – material or energy entering the system being studied that has been drawn from the environment without previous human transformation, or material or energy leaving the system being studied that is released into the environment without subsequent human transformation

**environmental mechanism** – system of physical, chemical and biological processes for a given impact category, linking the life cycle inventory analysis results to category indicators and to category endpoints

**feedstock energy** – heat of combustion of a raw material input that is not used as a n energy source to a product system, expressed in terms of higher heating value or lower heating value

**functional unit** – quantified performance of a product system for use as a reference unit

**impact category** – class representing environmental issues of concern to which life cycle inventory analysis results may be assigned

**process** – set of interrelated or interacting activities that transforms inputs into outputs

**process energy** – energy input required for operating the process or equipment within a unit process, excluding energy inputs for production and delivery of the energy itself

**product** – any goods or service

**product system** – collection of unit processes with elementary and product flows, performing one or more defined functions, and which models the life cycle of a product

**life cycle** – consecutive and interlinked stages of a product system, from raw material acquisition or generation from natural resources to final disposal.

**life cycle assessment (LCA)** – compilation and evaluation of the inputs, outputs and potential impacts of a product system throughout its life cycle

**life cycle inventory (LCI) analysis** – phase of LCA involving the compilation and quantification of inputs and outputs for a product throughout its life cycle

**life cycle inventory (LCI) result** – outcome of a life cycle inventory analysis that catalogues the flows crossing the system boundary and provides the starting point for the life cycle impact assessment

**life cycle impact assessment (LCIA)** – phase of LCA aimed at understanding and evaluating the magnitude and significance of the potential environmental impacts for a product system throughout the life cycle of the product

**life cycle interpretation** – phase of LCA in which the findings of either the inventory analysis or the impact assessment, or both, are evaluated in relation to the defined goal and scope in order to reach conclusions and recommendations

**raw material** – primary or secondary material that is used to produce a product

**reference flow** – measure of the outputs from processes in a given product system required to fulfill the function expressed by the functional unit

**system boundary** – set of criteria specifying which unit processes are part of a product system, and which impacts created by the product system are considered.

**unit process** – smallest element considered in the life cycle inventory analysis for which input and output data are quantified